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SIPDIS

AIDAC

STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
STATE FOR TSUNAMI TASK FORCE 1
USAID/W FOR A/AID ANDREW NATSIOS, JBRAUSE
DCHA/OFDA GGOTTLEB, MMARX, RTHAYER, BDEEMER
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
TSUNAMI RESPONSE MANAGEMENT TEAM

SIPDIS

DCHA/FFP FOR LAUREN LANDIS
DCHA BUREAU FOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR ROGER WINTER
ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD
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KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER
GENEVA FOR USAID KYLOH
ROME PASS FODAG
NSC FOR MELINE
CDR USPACOM FO J3/J4/POLAD
BRUSSELS FOR USEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA - EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS:
USAID/DART SITREP #4

SUMMARY

1. As of January 7, according to the Center for National Operations (CNO), the earthquake and tsunamis killed 30,718 people in Sri Lanka. On January 7, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and USAID

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Administrator Andrew Natsios, along with the U.S. Ambassador and USAID/Colombo Health and Humanitarian Affairs Officer (HHAO), visited Galle in southern Sri Lanka. The USAID/Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) maintains close cooperation with the U.S. military to coordinate relief flights and provide air support to those non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that request assistance with the transport of relief supplies. Safe waste disposal remains an issue in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. The USAID/DART continues to work with the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen the sentinel surveillance system in Sri Lanka. The USAID/DART is working with local partners to integrate psycho-social issues into tsunami relief efforts. End summary.

Death Tolls

2. The CNO, which is responsible for the overall coordination of the relief effort in Sri Lanka, reports that as of January 7 at 1700 hours local time, the earthquake and tsunamis killed 30,718 people, injured 14,573 residents, displaced 515,234 persons, completely damaged 91,749 houses, and partially damaged 19,932 houses. Currently there are 4,939 persons missing. According to the CNO, there are 592 camps housing displaced persons.

Visit of Secretary of State Powell and USAID
Administrator Natsios

3. On January 7, U.S. Secretary of State Powell, USAID Administrator Natsios, and the U.S. Ambassador visited Galle in southern Sri Lanka. The USAID/HHAO arranged the visit and led the tour of the affected area. The group visited St. Aloysius College in Galle, which was previously a school for 1500 boys and girls and is now serving as a camp for IDPs. At present, the college is housing 160 families whose homes were completely destroyed by the earthquake.

Coordination with the U.S. Military

4. On January 7, the USAID/DART Military Liaison Officers (MLO) coordinated 29 flights with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) that carried 2,000 water

containers, 2 metric tons (MT) of plastic sheeting, 2 MT of hygiene kits, 2 MT of water tablets, and 16 passengers. One USMC medical team was also deployed to Jaffna teaching hospital.

15. The MLOs also established a coordination interface with the USMC Combined Support Force and Combined Support Groups, led by Brigadier General Panter. A USAID/DART MLO will serve as a liaison and will be located in the Operations Cell of the Combined Support Group.

NGO Coordination

16. On January 7, the USAID/DART and the USAID/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Director met with NGOs in an initial effort to develop coordination and standardization regarding upcoming water and sanitation and cash-for-work activities. During this meeting, the USAID/OFDA Director stressed that the U.S. military was eager to provide logistical support to assist in relief activities and urged NGOs to take advantage of this support. The USAID/OFDA Director also raised the issue of psycho-social support as an important activity and stressed that programming should focus upon protection issues and the issue of child trafficking. The group also discussed the issue of cash-for-work, in particular daily wages.

17. At a meeting of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), the USAID/DART Water and Sanitation Officer (WSO) advised humanitarian agencies that the U.S. military would be able to assist with the transport of goods from Colombo to other districts, and coordination for these activities will occur through the USAID/DART.

Donor Coordination

18. On January 7, the USAID/DART attended a coordination meeting chaired by the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) that included the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), and the U.N. Development Program (UNDP). The group discussed the issue of transitional housing and the efforts made by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) to ensure standardization of shelter for victims, a timeframe for providing shelter, and coverage issues. More information and a final decision on transitional housing are forthcoming.

Water and Sanitation

19. On January 7, the USAID/DART WSO attended a water and sanitation meeting and reported that most of the districts have their own coordinating systems, and the water boards are engaged in relief activities. The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) is currently the lead U.N. agency in the water and sanitation sector.

110. According to the USAID/DART WSO, hygiene education was discussed, and camp managers are encouraged to promote hygiene education. The USAID/DART WSO reported that the Ministry of Urban Development and Water Supply and the Ministry of Health (MOH) must coordinate and promote the same message, and a workgroup was formed, including NGOs, UNICEF, and the MOH, to develop a promotional message. Promotional materials were also provided to all USAID/OFDA NGO partners working in the areas of health education and hygiene promotion.

111. Safe waste disposal has become an issue in camps, and waste management and solid waste removal must be factored into activities. USAID/OFDA implementing partners have been funded to rehabilitate wells and water systems, and there is a cash-for-work program for the cleaning of debris.

112. A World Bank assessment team will be arriving on January 8 to assess the damage caused by the earthquake and tsunamis. UNICEF is concerned that smaller needs will not be met and will send officials to accompany the assessment team.

113. On January 7, the USAID/DART WSO attended a relief operations meeting at the CHA. During the

meeting, concerns were expressed regarding the discrepancies in the numbers of dead and displaced persons between NGOs and official GOSL numbers. No conclusion was reached regarding this issue.

Health

¶14. On January 8, the USAID/DART Team Leader and USAID/DART WSO met with two WHO representatives to discuss supporting and strengthening the existing communicable disease sentinel surveillance system that exists in Sri Lanka. The WHO representatives expressed their satisfaction with WHO's long and fruitful collaboration with USAID/OFDA in the area of sentinel surveillances systems starting with the Orissa Super Cyclone in October 1999. The WHO representatives stated that while the sentinel surveillance system was initiated to monitor emergency phases, the systems have continued to affect the long-term success of the health system in Gujarat. The USAID/DART will continue to work with WHO and collaborate and coordinate as the surveillance system is structured in Sri Lanka. The USAID/DART team will also assist WHO with additional technical expertise and will share air assets for WHO's monitoring trips.

¶15. According to the CNO, specific health needs for camps will be presented in the next few days. The biggest concern is sanitation and the prevention of communicable diseases. The USAID/DART is coordinating with NGO partners and funding projects to address sanitation needs in Trincomalee, Mullaittiv, Jaffna, and Ampara.

Protection

¶16. USAID/OFDA is working with local partners to implement an informal meeting to discuss psycho-social relief issues and human trafficking response approaches. The meeting will discuss simple, practical approaches to integrate these issues into on-going efforts and discuss who is doing what, outstanding needs, and mechanisms for working together. [Note. This meeting took place on January 9, and more information will be forthcoming. End Note.]

Security

¶17. The issue of security was discussed at the CHA, and law and order remains an issue of potential concern in the areas that were affected by the earthquake and tsunamis. A task force has been formed to address the issue of security. Landmines are also a concern, and UNICEF is preparing a map with areas that contain landmines. UNICEF reports that there have been no instances of injuries or death from unintentional detonations of landmines.

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